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ABSTRACT

Research has shown that the social networks of children are among the major socializing influences within children's environments. This study sought to determine the relationship between early adolescents' social networks and their corresponding value preferences. Subjects were 36 boys and 29 girls in two middle-class sixth-grade classrooms. The Rokeach Values Survey-Form D, revised by Cole (1972), and a social network protocol were administered in groups. Responses to the social network protocol were divided by adult composition into four groups: male-dominated (N=10), female-dominated (N=16), balanced (N=15), and no-adults listed (N=24). Chi-square analysis revealed that the adult composition of the social-network groups was not independent of the gender of the early adolescents. The Mann-Whitney U Test indicated seven terminal and eight instrumental value rankings were significantly different between the social network groups. Results were interpreted to reflect the gender of the children within each group: predominantly male groups ranked higher values that reflect an orientation of justice and individuation, while groups composed mostly of girls ranked higher values that focus on relationships. Little influence was demonstrated by the gender of the adults listed in the social-networks in the values of the sixth graders, thus failing to confirm the socializing influence of nonfamilial adults on gender differences in moral orientations of young adolescents. (Author)

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Values of Early Adolescents Compared by Social Network Groups

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Abstract

Research has shown that the social networks of children are among the major socializing influences within children's environments. This study sought to determine the relationship between early adolescents' social networks and their corresponding value preferences. Subjects were 36 boys and 29 girls in two middle-class sixth-grade classrooms. The *Rokeach Values Survey-Form D*, revised by Cole (1972), and a social-network protocol were administered in groups. Responses to the social-network protocol were divided by adult composition into four groups: Male-dominated (n = 10), female-dominated (n = 16), balanced (n = 15) and no-adults listed (n = 24). Chi-square analysis revealed that the adult composition of the social-network groups was not independent of the gender of the early adolescents, X^2 (3, N = 65) = 16.268, p = .001. The Mann-Whitney U Test indicated 7 terminal and 8 intrumental value rankings were significantly different ($p < .05$) between the social network groups. Results were interpreted to reflect the gender of the children within each group: predominantly male groups ranked higher values that reflect an orientation of justice and individuation, while groups composed mostly of girls ranked higher values that focus on relationships. Little influence was demonstrated by the gender of the adults listed in the social-networks in the values of the sixth graders, thus failing to confirm the socializing influence of nonfamilial adults on gender differences in moral orientations of young adolescents.

Values of Early Adolescents
Compared by Social Network Groups

Throughout history women have been viewed as inferior in the ability to make moral judgements. In the twentieth century, the cognitive-interactionist approach to moral development ordinarily has placed women at a lower stage of moral reasoning than that commonly assigned to men. Recently, however, investigators have proposed that women differ from men, not in stage level of development, but in moral orientation. Women demonstrate a morality of compassionate caring that emphasizes relationships among individuals. Men, in contrast, develop a moral orientation of justice based on rules, reciprocity and individuation.

What is the developmental basis of the differing moral orientations of men and women? The structural-developmental position assumes that the growth of knowledge is the result of an interaction between children and their environments. Systematic differences in relationships with other people yield different cognitive frameworks with which children may then organize their comprehension of the world.

Research into the ecology of human development has demonstrated that the social networks of children are among the major socializing influences in children's environments. While certain social network configurations have been shown to predict social-emotional functioning, the role of social networks in the

development of moral values has not been investigated. The need to understand the source of gender differences in moral orientations and the lack of knowledge about the role of social networks in the development of moral values both call for further research.

Moral Orientations

Langdale (1986) noted that both Kohlberg (1969) and Piaget (1965), on whose work Kohlberg based his landmark theory of moral development, used exclusively male samples in their research. The selection of justice as the primary criterion of the moral domain was not empirically based, but rather had a philosophical origin that was supported by evidence from the male-only sample. Langdale pointed out that the result was an exclusion of data pointing to a care orientation in moral decision-making processes that may have been revealed if Kohlberg and Piaget had included women in the sampling process.

Gilligan (1977) interviewed 29 women contemplating abortion, and from the data outlined three levels of moral development within an orientation of responsibility and care. In the first level women focused their attention on their own individual survival. Next, at the second level, women's concern centered on responsibility: the responsibility they saw themselves holding for the care of their unborn child, and the responsibility they would hold for themselves. Finally, at the third level, women adopted the moral principle of nonviolence, and applied it universally. Gilligan asserted that

women's orientation toward relationships, which had been viewed by theorists as an impediment to their moral development, is more correctly seen as a parallel but equivalent developmental path.

Gilligan's (1977) argument was subsequently supported by Lyons (1983) who interviewed both male and female children, adolescents and adults. Using a coding scheme for identifying self-definition and moral judgment styles, the author described two patterns of self-description among the 36 subjects: separateness (11 males, 2 females) and relatedness (0 males, 10 females). In addition, two orientations in moral decision-making were observed: justice (11 males, 2 females) and care (0 males, 10 females). Within a justice orientation what is right in a decision is based on self-perspective: "How would I feel?" An objective distance is created between self and others, and finally a rule is applied. In contrast, a care orientation centers on the perspective of others: a moral decision is based on the least painful alternative in terms of how the other person feels. The author noted that, while females predominantly chose self descriptions of relatedness and orientations of care, the observed dichotomy was not absolute.

Langdale (1986) presented male and female children, adolescents and adults with questions about themselves, morality, and four moral dilemmas. Results of the investigation demonstrated that the justice and care dichotomy in moral orientation of males and females was consistent from early childhood through age 60, indicating the early

acquisition of moral orientation and the stability of this orientation over time.

A study of prosocial development among middle-school age children also revealed gender differences in moral reasoning. Eisenberg, Shell, Lennon, Beller, and Mathy (1987) found that reasoning related to sympathy and role-taking increased in early adolescence among girls but not among boys. The authors expressed the belief that "it is quite likely that this gender difference reflects differences in the socialization of an other-oriented orientation" (p.717).

Hoffman (1970), in a review of current literature, posited that moral development is the result of the complex interaction of four processes: social learning, objectification of authority and rules, control of antisocial impulses by love withdrawal, and a socialization pattern that integrates children's ability to empathize and their cognitive skill in understanding the potentially harmful effects of their actions upon others. The fourth process "can be enhanced by any experience that helps broaden the range of situations in which the child can empathize (p. 347). Hoffman cited "exposure to adults who openly express empathy and compassion" (p. 347) among examples of this fourth process.

Although Kagan (1984) theorized that moral values are traceable to universal feelings that have a biological origin, Kagan's position would be compatible with Hoffman (1970) in his assertion that the

relative prominence of moral values is the product of cultural influences. Kagan saw the biological origin of standards reflected in the universal appearance of empathy and an understanding of right and wrong in toddlers. Later in development, a biologically determined need appears for consistency among beliefs, deeds, and what is believed to be real. However, according to Kagan, the role of the culture is also seen in the acquisition of standards, through the process of identification with others.

Thus, the literature demonstrates that both a justice and a care orientation in moral judgment exist among children in middle childhood (Eisenberg et al., 1987; Lyons, 1983) and that differences in moral development may be a result of socializing processes (Hoffman, 1970; Kagan,1984). As Ogbu (1987) pointed out, although socialization begins with the family, learning also takes place in other settings.

Social Networks

A child's social network may be one possible agent of moral development. Bryant (1985) investigated the relationship between the social networks of children in middle childhood and certain social-emotional outcomes. Subjects included 168 nonmetropolitan and rural boys and girls from a broad range of SES groups. In large families, for example, the amount of interaction with adults as measured by the children's social network was positively related to empathic functioning. Likewise, more intimate talks with members of the grandparent generation positively predicted empathy among

children in large families. Bryant theorized that in large families children may seek out support from adults to complement the parental resources that they must share with their siblings. A gender difference in social networks reported by the children was noted as well: Girls in middle childhood reported fewer but more intense relationships with peers, while boys reported more extensive and less intimate relationships. The gender difference noted by Bryant echoes the dichotomy in moral orientation that Langdale (1986) found among children.

Parke (1985) noted that Bryant's (1985) research highlighted the importance in socioemotional development of relationships with people outside the family. Further, Parke pointed out that different functions were served by different members of the social networks described by Bryant. The role of adults in the social-support network, which is of particular interest in the present discussion, was addressed by Garbarino, Burston, Rabner, Russell and Crouter (1978) in a study of the social networks of 111 sixth-grade children from three schools. The perspective of the authors was that a social network functions as a social resource for the child. In the viewpoint of the authors "the perceived enduring interest of others, particularly nonfamilial adults, is believed to be a prime component of a 'rich' social environment" (p. 419). Results indicated that adults living outside the children's homes comprised 19% (rural) to 33% (urban) of the social network among the sixth graders. However, 60% of suburban children listed no

nonfamilial adults in their social networks that they saw "at least one time per month."

Results from Blyth, Hill and Thiel's (1982) investigation into the significant relationships of suburban seventh- through tenth-graders found somewhat less evidence of age segregation. Blyth et al. found 40% of the males and 25% of the females did not list any nonrelated adult as significant in their lives. The authors suggested that differences in methodology from the Garbarino et al. (1978) format may be partly responsible for the difference in outcomes: Blyth et al. (1982) did not restrict the list of significant others to ten nominations, allowing for the increased inclusion of the less salient adults.

Noting that children imitate adults in moral behavior, Cochran and Brassard (1979) theorized that "it is quite reasonable to expect that network persons themselves might influence the child's behavior through the models they present" (p. 605). The authors' position was supported by Kim (1987) who looked at prosocial modeling with preschool age children. Kim found an increase in demonstrated helping behaviors as the children viewed several adults in helping situations.

Values

Value preferences may be a direct reflection of moral orientations. McCartin, Freehill and Greig (1984) surveyed sixth-grade pupils in 1982 and compared the results to a survey taken by Cole

(1972) in the same schools decade earlier. The authors found in the comparison across a decade that when more individualistic values are preferred, interpersonal or societal values decrease in preference ranking. "Choices between values often require choosing between individual and social good, or between independence and social connectedness" (p. 229), again echoing the dichotomy of moral orientation observed by Langdale (1986).

The literature on peer versus adult influence on child development affirms as well the continuing impact of adults on the values of young people. Sebald and White (1980) found that the influence of the peer group on teenage values was limited to specific issues, such as hobbies and school social activities, while in many areas, such as money and career plans, parental opinion guided the attitudes of adolescents. Likewise, Kandel and Lesser (1969) found that teenage friends did not share similar attitudes on topics such as politics or career aspirations; mutual attitudes were limited to school-related themes. The socializing influence of adults on young people was also demonstrated by Bowerman (1959) who found that adolescents' positive adjustment to the family relates directly to their greater orientation toward parental values and norm acceptance.

Regarding moral development, Siegal and Boyes (1980) found in a review of current literature that adult influences on children's moral judgment decisions increased as they grow older. The authors concluded that adults are more effective models than peers for

stimulating the development of moral judgments. DeVaus (1983) similarly found that adults were more influential than peers in the area of religious beliefs among adolescents.

Not all children are adult-oriented, however. Garbarino et al. (1978) found that in their social networks, 60% of suburban children reported no adults outside the immediate family who were seen at least once a month among the "top ten" individuals in their social network. Researchers are interested in behavioral and value differences between adult-oriented and peer-oriented children such as those described by Garbarino et al.(1978). Condry and Siman (1974) found that adult-oriented sixth-grade children tended to value dependability, truthfulness, conformity to adult demands, orderliness, and doing schoolwork well more than did peer-oriented children. Likewise, Biddle (1980) deemed that school achievement among adolescents was more a response to normative standards of parents than a preference pattern of peer influence.

In summary, two orientations exist in moral development: a morality of compassionate caring with a focus on relationships that has been demonstrated among females, and a morality of justice which demands individuation that has been observed among males. Further, the process of socialization is seen as a factor in moral development. The literature has shown that social-support networks are an important socializing agent, and in particular, the adult members of the social-support network play a socializing role in moral

development. Finally, the differences in relatedness and individuation are reflected in value preferences.

This study looked into the composition of children's social networks and their corresponding value preferences. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the social networks and the value orientations of sixth-grade students as measured by a social network protocol and a value preference survey. The hypothesis was that significant differences in value preferences exist among early adolescents who report social networks that differ by gender of the adults listed.

Method

Subjects

Subjects selected for this study were 65 members (36 boys and 29 girls) of two sixth-grade classes located in two suburban schools of comparable middle class socio-economic and educational status.

Instrumentation

The Rokeach Values Survey-Form D as revised by Cole (1972) was administered to both classrooms as a group activity. The revised instrument did not include items inappropriate for preadolescent children, such as "mature love," and added one item recommended by an expert panel composed of faculty members of the University of Washington and experienced teachers in graduate programs: "influential." The modified survey is a card-sorting task including 14 terminal values (end states of existence, e.g., "admiration and respect")

and 15 instrumental values (modes of conduct, e.g., "honest") which the children are asked to rank in order of importance.

A social-network protocol was administered to both classrooms on a subsequent day as a group activity. The task was demonstrated to the children, and then children were asked to list individually the "10 people who I know or know me best" outside of family members who live at home, and to specify sex, age, length of time known and frequency of meetings.

Results

Social Network Protocol

Children's responses were divided into groups on the basis of the adult composition of the reported social network. Four groups were revealed: male dominant (n=10), female dominant (n=16), balanced (n=15) and no-adults listed (n=24). A chi-square analysis was applied to the groups to determine if the children's placement in social network group was independent of the child's gender. Results were significant, $X^2(3, = 65)=16.268$, $p = .001$. Thus, the breakdown of early adolescents into social network groups on the basis of the gender of adults listed was not independent of the gender of the children themselves. Male-dominated social networks were listed by boys and girls in a 6/4 ratio. However, primarily girls (14 girls, 2 boys) listed female-dominated social networks, and primarily boys listed both balanced social networks (11 boys, 4 girls) and networks without any adults (17 boys and 7 girls).

Rokeach Value Survey

The values found in the Rokeach Value Survey are all very desirable. As Thompson, Levitov, and Miederhoff (1982) pointed out, the practical reality is that a child cannot pursue all values with equal resources. The Rokeach Value Survey forces each of the subjects to rank the values given in a value system. Thus, the relative, not the absolute importance, of a value is revealed. The Mann-Whitney *U* Test (Ferguson, 1981) was used to test the significance of the differences between value rankings of children in each of the four social-network groups. In accordance with statistical practice, *Z* scores are reported when a group is larger than 20 children, while *U* scores are reported when both groups are composed of less than 20 children (Huck, Cormier & Bounds, 1974). Seven terminal value comparisons and 8 instrumental value comparisons were found to reveal significant differences between social network groups ($p < .05$), as shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Among terminal values, children with female-dominated social networks rated True Friendship significantly higher than children with no adults in their social network, $Z\ (16,24) = -2.07$, $p = .04$. Likewise, the female-dominated children rated Family Love significantly higher than children with a gender-balanced social

network, U (16,15) = 61.5, p = .02; as well as children who listed no adults in their social networks, Z (16, 24) = -2.45, p = .01. Please refer to Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The children with female-dominated social networks rated a Prosperous Life significantly lower than both children with gender-balanced social networks, U (16,15) = 69.0, p = .04, and children who listed no adults, Z (16,24) = -2.03, p = .04.. Finally, the female-dominated children rated Pleasure significantly lower than children with no adults listed, Z (16,23) = -2.18, p = .03. See Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2 about here

With regard to instrumental values, children with male-dominated social networks ranked Brave significantly higher than female dominated children,U (10,16) = 31.0, p = .01; and Forgiving significantly higher than children who listed no adults, Z (10,25) = -2.11, p = .04. Please see Figure 3.

Insert Figure 3 about here

Children with female-dominated social networks ranked Helpful significantly higher than children with either gender-balanced social networks, U (16,15) = 60.5, p = .02; or children listing no adults, Z (16,24) = -2.05, p = .04. Female-dominated children also ranked Loving significantly higher than children listing a gender-balanced network, U (15,16) = 68.5, p = .04; and Forgiving significantly higher than children who listed no adults, Z (16,24) = - 3.19, p = .00. Please refer to Figure 4.

Insert Figure 4 about here

Female-dominated children ranked Intelligent significantly lower than children who listed no adults Z (16,24) = -3.05, p = .00. and Influential lower than children with a gender-balanced social network, U (15,15) = 58.5, p = .01. Please see Figure 5.

Insert Figure 5 about here

Discussion

The large number of children (37%) listing no adults outside their immediate family in their social network supports findings by Garbarino, Burston, Rabner, Russell and Crouter (1978) where a large proportion (60%) of suburban early adolescents reported no adult members of their "top ten" social network who are seen once a month.

The findings of the present study also support Blyth, Hill and Thiel (1982) who reported 40% of the male adolescents and 25% of the female adolescents in their study listed no significant nonfamilial adults in their lives. The impact of age segregation is particularly evident among the boys of this sixth-grade sample. Forty-seven percent of the boys in these suburban classrooms did not include any nonfamilial adults among their social network members. If, as in the perspective of Garbarino et al. (1978), the social network serves as an important resource to children, almost half of the boys in this study do not appear to recognize adult sources of support within their school, neighborhood, and community. In contrast, less than a quarter of the girls among these preadolescents failed to list any nonfamilial adults among those people "who I know or who know me best," while almost half (47%) of the girls reported social networks with a higher proportion of adult females. Among these suburban girls, the support of same-sex adults is recognized.

The values of the early adolescents listing no extrafamilial adults in their social networks differed from those of the children with female-dominated social networks on 7 of the 15 significant differences revealed here. The no-adult group ranked Pleasure, Prosperous Life, and Intelligent significantly higher than the female-dominated group, and True Friendship, Family Love, Helpful and Forgiving significantly lower than the female-dominated group. The dichotomy between a moral orientation of relatedness and one of individuation described by

Gilligan (1977), Lyons (1983) and Langdale (1987) appears to be reflected by these significant value rankings. Pleasure, Prosperous Life and Intelligent are values one might expect to find highly rated from a moral perspective of individuation, while True Friendship, Family Love, Helpful and Forgiving are values that are likely to be highly rated from an orientation of caring that emphasizes relationships among individuals. Nevertheless, as Garbarino et al. (1978) noted, social networks both influence children and reflect the characteristics of the children themselves. The differing value orientations between the female-dominated social network group and the group listing no adults may well reflect the gender differences of the children in each group: the female-dominated group being mostly girls, and the group reporting no adults being primarily boys.

The female-dominated social network early adolescents varied significantly from the group reporting gender-balanced social networks on six values. Family Love, Loving, and Helpful were ranked more highly, while Influential, Prosperous Life, and Exciting Life were ranked at a significantly lower level. Again, the dichotomy between an orientation of relatedness and one of individuation appears to be present. However, the gender of the children themselves seems to be operating, with the primarily female female-dominated social network group in contrast to the mostly male gender-balanced social network group.

Only on the value of Brave did the male-dominated social network group (6 boys and 4 girls) significantly differ from the female-dominated children, (14 girls and 2 boys), with the former group ranking Brave more highly. On this value it seems that the relatedness-individuation dichotomy characteristic of the adults in the social network may be operating.

It appears from the results of this study that the values of children listing social networks of different adult configurations do differ from each other in a meaningful way: groups dominated by boys rank values that reflect an orientation of individuation more highly, while groups of girls rank more highly values that appear to reflect an orientation of relatedness. Secondly, the adult composition of social networks in these preadolescents seems to be a reflection of the gender of the children themselves, and not a determining factor in their values. Little evidence was found to support a strong influence by the the gender of adult members the social networks in the value orientations of the early adolescents in this study.

Continued research is needed to explore the source of differing moral orientations and the role of social networks in the moral development of early adolescents. While values such as True Friendship and Family Love appear to differ from those such as Pleasure and Prosperous Life on the basis of a dichotomy between relatedness and individuation, more work is needed to substantiate these intuitive evaluations. Finally, the findings here of a large

proportion of exclusively peer-oriented sixth-graders is further evidence of age-segregation among early adolescents. It is a concern that such a high percentage of these young people, particularly boys, fail to recognize adult sources of community support.

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Table 1

Rank Order of Rokeach Values by Adult Composition of theSocial-Network Group

	Male	Female	Balanced	No Adults
		Instrumental Values		
Self-controlled	10.40	10.38	8.87	7.95
Polite	8.00	6.50	7.60	7.96
Loving	7.30	3.81*	6.87*	6.13
Intelligent	5.90	8.88*	7.53	4.92*
Influential	9.90	12.38*	9.00*	10.42
Honest	6.40	5.31	5.40	6.71
Helpful	7.30	5.50*	9.40*	8.04*
Forgiving	5.20*	4.06*	6.40	8.38*
Dependable	7.00	8.69	7.07	9.25
Creative	7.50	10.56	9.13	8.33
Clean	11.80	9.00	10.27	8.88
Cheerful	10.30	7.31	7.40	8.87
Capable	8.90	9.40	7.60	8.38
Brave	5.70*	10.69*	8.60	8.38
Ambitious	8.40	7.81	9.47	7.38
		Terminal Values		
Prosperous Life	10.10	11.31*	8.47*	8.38*
True Friendship	5.90	4.00*	5.47	6.08*
Secure Country	9.00	8.56	8.43	8.42

(continued)

Religious Freedom	5.70	5.25	6.93	5.71
Pleasure	7.10	10.06*	7.60	7.23*
Peaceful World	7.10	7.25	7.87	6.63
Freedom of Choice	7.00	7.38	7.27	7.13
Feeling of Achievement	9.40	8.63	8.93	8.87
Family Love	4.30	3.00*	6.80*	6.25*
Exciting Life	6.20*	9.31	5.67*	7.25
Equal Opportunity	8.90	8.31	9.47	8.75
Confidence & Pride	5.40	7.31	7.87	7.38
Beautiful World	10.10	8.75	7.33	9.33
Admiration & Respect	9.00	5.81	6.87	7.00

* Significant at $p < .05$.

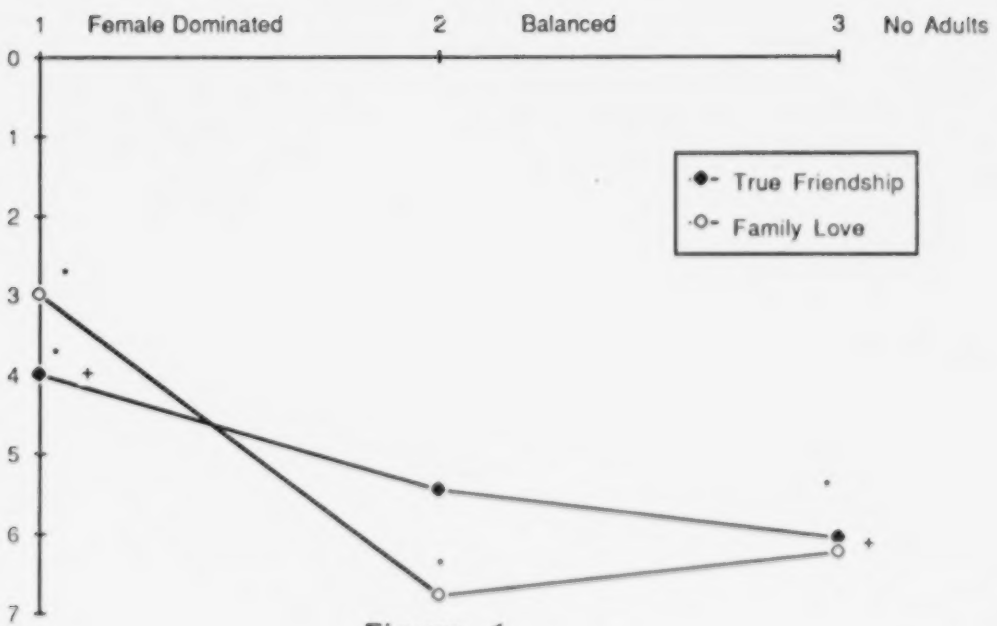
1 Female Dominated
2 Balanced
3 No Adults
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
True Friendship
Family Love

Figure 1

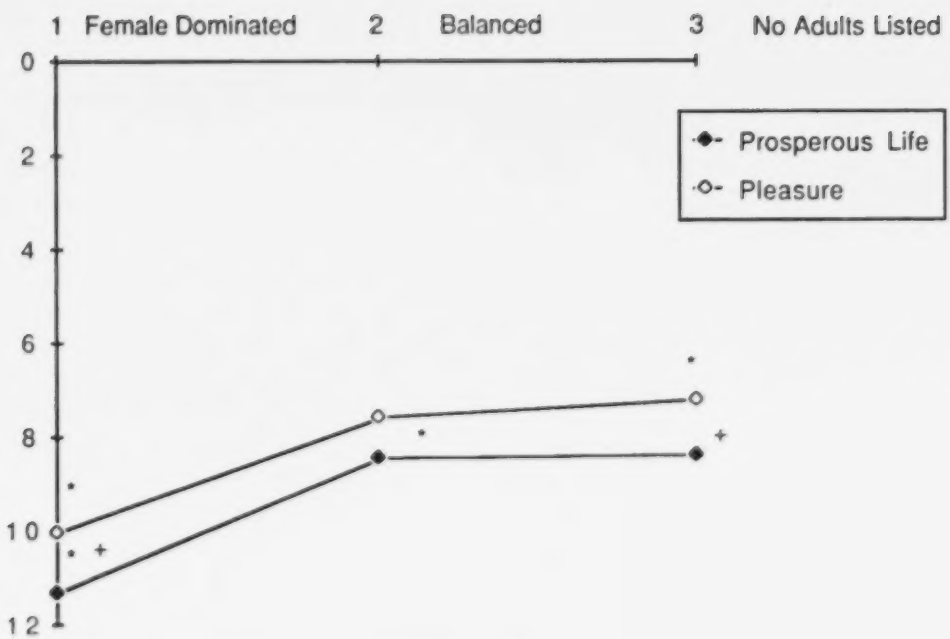
1 Female Dominated
2 Balanced
3 No Adults Listed
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
Prosperous Life
Pleasure

Figure 2

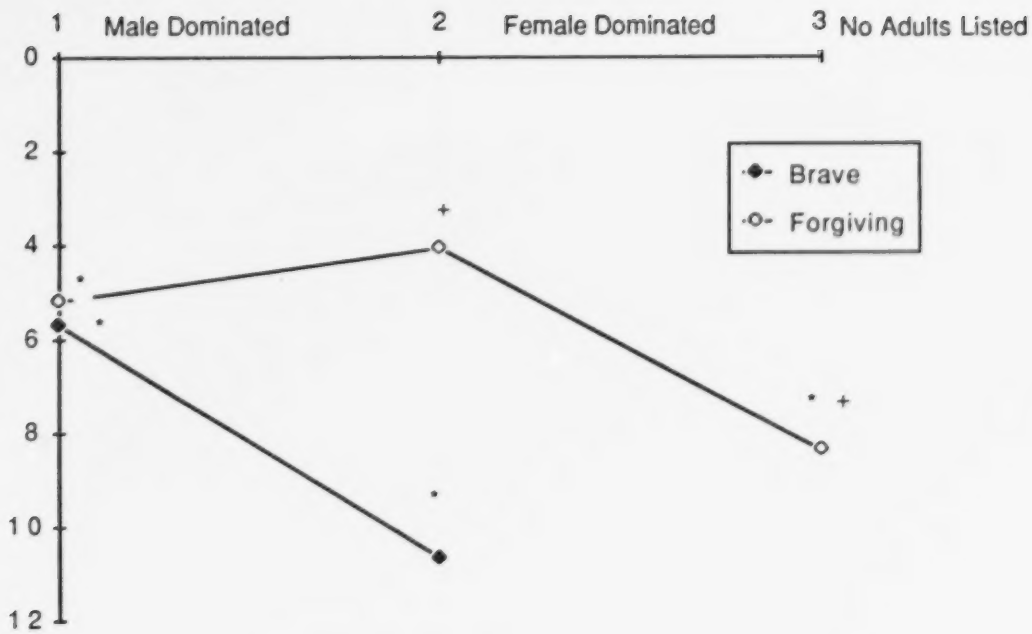
1 Male Dominated
2 Female Dominated
3 No Adults Listed
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
Brave
Forgiving

Figure 3

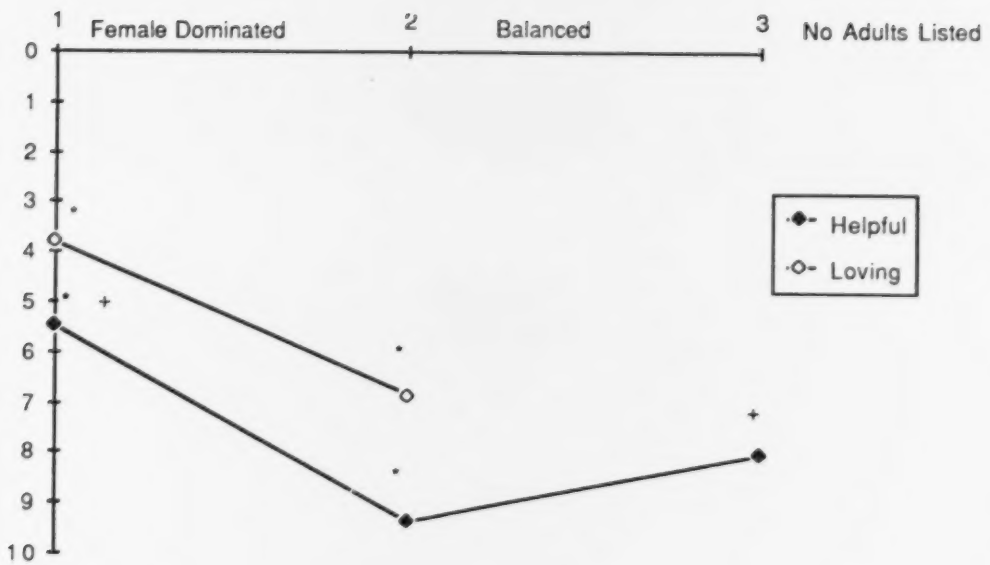
1
Female Dominated
2
Balanced
3
No Adults Listed
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Helpful
Loving

Figure 4

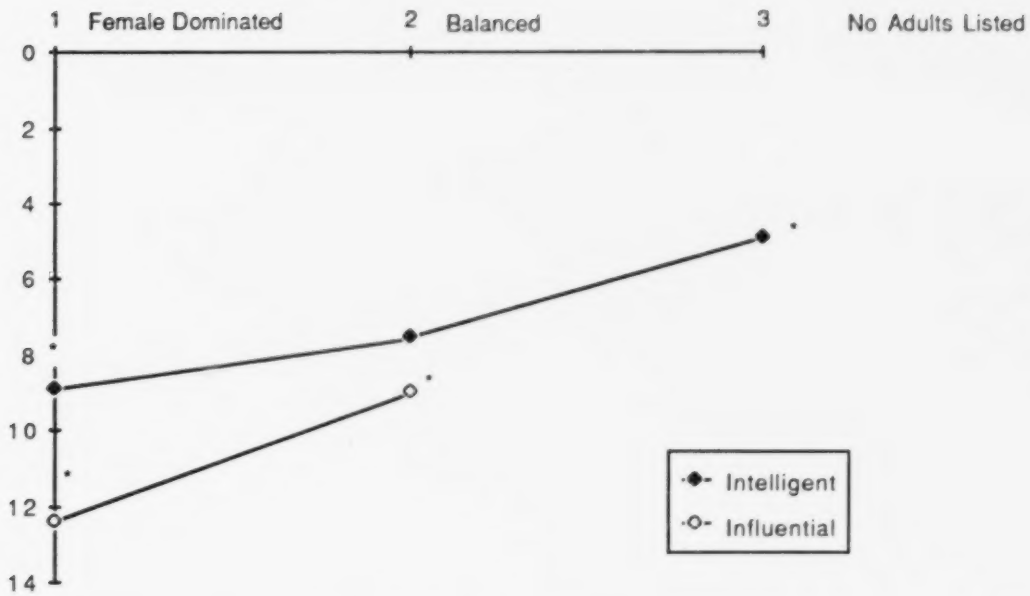
1 Female Dominated
2 Balanced
3 No Adults Listed
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
Intelligent
Influential

Figure 5